

after-additions being required. Instead of exercising such foresight, which, even if useless, would, at all events, have been harmless, Sir Robert Smirke has done that which must render the trustees very averse to any scheme for making additions that would destroy the lower quadrangle, more attention being paid there to consistency of architectural design and completeness than to the façade itself, for even were the latter very much better than it is, the disparity between the centre building and all the rest, would destroy all grandeur of ensemble. Likely enough it will be found out in the course of time—and not a very long time either—that a very great deal of space has been unnecessarily thrown away between the building and the street. Surely it would have been better to have brought the former quite up to the latter,—to have erected an ornamental screen façade, not having an open court behind it, as in the original Montague House, but a covered vestibule or avenue leading immediately from the street to the main building, which, being completely shut out from view, might have been quite a plain brick structure, and upon the ground between the body of the pile and the exterior façade other buildings might, without inconvenience, have been erected, as occasion for them might arise. Such is the case of the Bank of England, whose façades come up quite to the street pavement, and are, in fact, only so many screens that enclose a labyrinth of courts and irregular buildings.

ZETA.

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION.

SOCIETY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AT AMSTERDAM.

WE are requested by Mr. Warninck to say, on the part of the committee, with respect to the plans for a theatre required in competition in 1848, that eight designs were received, one of which, coming too late and being unfinished, was not taken into consideration,—and that it is the unanimous opinion of the committee, that not any of the designs are entirely satisfactory, according to the conditions named in the programme; so that the prize of 500 florins cannot be awarded. Nevertheless, as the designs No. 3 ("La critique peut faire éviter ce qui est laid; le génie seul peut faire trouver ce qui est beau") and No. 6 ("Spectatum admissum risum teneatis amici") are considered far before the others,—that is to say, No. 3 by the finish of the work, by a well-studied plan, and a distribution which has much merit, and No. 6 by a fine ordonnance both exterior and interior, conceived in a style pure and noble,—the committee offers to the authors of the two designs 300 florins, if they will consent to the notes being opened which contain their names and addresses, and to the yielding up of their designs to the society, who hereby invite them to do so.

THE PROPOSED BUILDING IN HYDE-PARK.

At a meeting of the Institute on the 24th inst., when Mr. Donaldson placed on the table an authentic copy of the detailed drawings of the building, for the inspection of members, Mr. Tite asked Mr. D. whether an estimate had been made of the cost, and whether he would state what the amount was? Mr. Donaldson replied that an estimate had been made, but that he could not state the amount. Mr. Tite said that he had had much experience in large roofs of that nature, and he thought the roof alone would cost 95,000*l*. Mr. Donaldson considered that it would not cost anything like that amount. Mr. Mayhew then said, he was sorry, as a member of the council, that he was obliged to say anything against the erection of the building in question, but as he individually felt strongly that a building of such a nature ought not to be constructed on any site where it could not remain for a permanency, he felt it his duty to protest against it: the construction was principally of brickwork and ironwork, and would cost at least 100,000*l*., which enormous sum would be nearly wholly thrown away if it were erected on the proposed site;—that, feeling, as they did, obliged to Prince Albert for the idea, and for his endeavours generally to promote science and taste in this country, he considered that the Institute

ought to memorialise His Royal Highness, and guard him against the result anticipated, praying him to obtain another site for the proposed building, where it could remain permanently, or to erect one of a more temporary character and more appropriate for the site. He was going to read a resolution to that effect, but the chairman (Mr. Howler), said he could not permit it, or allow a discussion to take place on the subject; but he was at liberty to give notice of motion for the next meeting. Mr. Burn said he entirely concurred in what had been said, and after a few other observations the matter dropped.

"* We are decidedly opposed to any alteration as to site: such a determination would amount to a postponement, if not ultimately the abandonment, of the scheme. The plan for building must be modified, brick walls eschewed, and the dome be reconsidered. Which of the building committee individually will take the responsibility of the stability of this dome as at first designed?"

A large number of the bills of quantities have been applied for, notwithstanding the price.

ON THE BEST MODE OF ARRANGING SEATS IN A PUBLIC ROOM FOR DISCUSSION AND HEARING.

THERE has been so much said of late on the subject of hearing, both in the House of Lords as well as the new House of Commons, that I think it is a subject well worthy of being discussed and commented on in *THE BUILDER*. I believe it is now a pretty well acknowledged fact that sound traverses in the same way as waves in still water when a stone is thrown in, viz., in concentric circles; and, another fact, that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection. Now, Sir, I think it stands to reason that if seats are arranged on the sides of a long room, persons directly opposite to the speaker would hear tolerably distinctly, but those seated at the farthest end of the room very indistinctly and imperfectly, and those in a gallery would scarcely hear at all. I believe that this has been found the case in both Houses of Parliament. Again, if you refer to the form of the Italian Opera House, or the arrangement of the Lecture Room at the Royal Institution,—in the one from the form of the house, and in the other from the general arrangement of the seats,—let a person be in any position, the sound is sent forth in distinct notes to all parts, and without vibration. There appears another advantage in this arrangement of seats, that the speakers can not only be distinctly heard, but also seen, by all parties; and at the same time it admits of a classification as required in the Houses of Parliament. I throw out these suggestions for the able discussion of those who are well capable of dilating on such a subject in a plain and practical way, and which might be of great assistance to the profession and others.

W.

BUILDERS' BILLS FOR WORK UNDER THE BUILDINGS ACT.

GABY P. MILLS.

THIS was an action brought in the Shoreditch County Court to recover the sum of 8*l*. 10*s*., balance of 18*l*. 10*s*. for the building of a workshop adjoining the gable end of the defendant's premises. Mr. Hutson, who appeared as solicitor for the defendant, submitted that the action could not be maintained, on the ground that the building was not in accordance with the statute of 7 & 8 Vict. c. 84, s. 13, and that the district surveyor had not, in conformity with the said enactment, received notice of the intended alteration. Mr. Hutson observed, that it was not to be supposed that the defendant should know anything about the Buildings Act, and urged that it was the duty of the builder to give the required notice. The consequence of such non-compliance with the Act had been that the greater portion of the erection was ordered by Mr. Wharton, the district surveyor, to be pulled down; the plaintiff having violated the Act of Parliament by using wood instead of brickwork. His Honour (Mr. Serjt. Storks) asked what the district surveyor was paid for his services? Mr. Hutson said the fee was 2*l*. 2*s*., in addition to which the defendant had paid 1*l*. for rebuilding that portion of the erection which was condemned.

Mr. Ashley, solicitor, on the part of the plaintiff, contended that there was nothing in the Act of Parliament to deprive the builder of his right to recover. It might be that a penalty had been incurred; but the work was done according to the

specification,—was not proceeded with until the plaintiff had notice from the defendant that he was to go on,—and was performed under the immediate superintendence of the defendant, who had from time to time expressed his satisfaction, had paid a portion of the estimate, and promised the payment of the balance.

These facts having been confirmed by the plaintiff's witnesses, his Honour said, that supposing there had been no such awkward legislation as the Buildings Act, the plaintiff's claim would have been as clear as the sun at noon-day. It was perfectly clear that neither party said anything about the district surveyor, and equally clear that the builder had done all he could according to the specification. But as the question was a novel one, and of considerable importance, he would defer his judgment that he might look into authorities and hear the testimony of the district surveyor.

Mr. Wharton having subsequently attended and given evidence, his Honour said he had looked into a variety of cases, but could find no decision under the Buildings Act applicable to the present case. In the case of *Bensley v. Bignold* (5 Barn. and Ald. 338), Chief Justice Abbott had decided that a party could not recover in direct violation of the law. The case referred to was one in which the printer's name did not appear in the publication. There was also a case, *Poster v. Fowler* (5 Baro. & Adol. 809), where the plaintiff brought an action for fifteen firkins of butter, which were not marked according to an Act of Parliament of George the Second, in which Judge Littledale had ruled that the plaintiff could not recover. His Honour also cited a similar case, in which Judge Holt held the same opinion, and referred to the case of *Ex parte Dwyer* (Rose's Bankruptcy Cases, p. 349), in which Lord Eldon had ruled to the same effect. His Honour observed that although he could find no case precisely in point, he relied upon the decisions laid down by the authorities referred to as bearing upon the principle involved in the present case, and was therefore of opinion that the plaintiff must be nonsuited.

Mr. Ashley hoped his Honour would, under the circumstances, order each party to pay his own costs. His Honour said as it was a case in which legal assistance was required on both sides, he could not comply with Mr. Ashley's request: the costs must follow the verdict.

BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

On the 12th instant, Mr. Pettigrew, V.P., in the chair,—a variety of antiquities were exhibited by Mr. G. Lowe, Mr. Pratt, and Mr. L. Jewell.

Communications were received from the Rev. Mr. Massie, of Chester, recording the discovery in that city of a Roman bronze eagle, about two inches in length, and a Corinthian capital, near which were a silver coin of Trajan and other Roman remains;—from Mr. C. Baily, an account and rubbings of rude carvings or marks in some of the window jambs of Goodrich Castle, representing a man hawking, various animals, and an inscription which appears to be the work of Master Adam Hastun,—also an account of a rude and early basin now placed on the south side of the communion table at Tretire Church, Herefordshire, in the place usually occupied by the piscina, but it was very doubtful if it was ever used for this purpose;—from Mr. H. Syer Cuming, on an ivory signet ring of an Earl of Shrewsbury, now in the possession of Dr. Iliff, and which, from the arms of Nevill appearing in the shield, he thought might have belonged to the first earl,—also some observations on carvings in morse ivory.*

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A PARTIAL response to our queries of last week has been given by Mr. Peto, who explained at the last meeting of the court, that with reference to the southern district of the metropolis, the whole of the plan of drainage may be considered as finally settled, the engineer being now engaged with the estimates. The earliest possible relief was requisite first for these districts. The plans for the Westminster district were also nearly ready. As to the northern, within ten days they were to consider the necessary plans in detail with the

* At the previous meeting, May 22, Mr. Planche exhibited a very interesting collection of tilting helmets and other parts of armour (contributed by Mr. Pratt), which the speaker said was one of the most perfect series of tilting helmets ever produced to any society; and at considerable length he pointed out the characters which distinguish the various ages of this important part of medieval defence.